their enforcement machinery. In the wake of rise in prices of wheat and pulses, orders were issued in August, 2006, empowering State Governments to fix stock-holding limits in respect of these two essential commodities.

Production of edible oil

640. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of edible oil in the country has been declining over the years;

(b) if so, the details of demand and supply of edible oil in the country during the last three years, State-wise and years-wise;

(c) the reasons for decline in production of edible oil during the said period;

(d) whether the edible oil production during the current years is likely to decline further;

(e) if so, the steps Government propose to take to increase the production of edible oil in the country; and

(f) the manner in which Government propose to protect the interest of the oilseed farmers and edible oil industry in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The production/net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources has increased during the last three years from 71.40 lakh tons in 2003-04 to 83.16 lakh tons in 2005-06.

(b) and (c) According to the projections for oilseeds/edible oils made for the Tenth Five Year Plan, the annual demand/requirement of edible oils in the country in terms of consumption of edible oils based on behaviouristic approach amounted to 107.80 lakh tons, 113.00 lakh tons and 118.50 lakh tons in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively.

Estimated domestic production/net availability and supply (from domestic and import sources) of edible oils during the last three years have been as under:-

(In lakh tonnes)

Oil Year	Net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources	Supply of edible oils from domestic and import sources
2003-04	71.40	124.30
2004-05	72.47	117.89
2005-06	83.16	126.04

State-wise data on demand/requirement and supply of edible oils is not maintained.

(d) The production/net availability of edible oils from all domestic sources has been estimated at 70.62 lakh tons during 2006-07.

(e) and (f) Steps taken by the Government to increase the production of edible oil in the country include enhanced incentives to the farmers through fixation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) of major oilseeds, implementation of Centrally Sponsored Integrated Scheme for Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM), in certain States, financial assistance for Oil Palm Development, assistance provided for purchase of breeder seed, production of foundation seed, production and distribution of certified seed, integrated pest management etc.

Some of the steps proposed/taken are:

(i) Import of oilseeds/edible oils except copra/coconut oil has been allowed on Open General Licence (OGL).

(ii) Import duty on certain vegetable oils of edible grade intended for manufacture of refined oil/vanaspati is levied at a concessional rate.

(iii) Import duty on certain crude vegetable oils of edible grade has been kept low as compared to refined oils to facilitate raw material availability.

(iv) In order to encourage production of solvent extracted oils in the country and to promote export of extractions, excise duty on food grade hexane has been reduced from 32% to 16%.

(v) Excise duty on refined edible oils/vanaspati/interesterified fat etc. has been withdrawn.

(vi) Import duty on vanaspati, bakery shortening, interesterified fat, margarine has been raised from 30% to 80%.

(vii) In order to harmonize the interests of farmers, processors and consumers, the import duty structure on edible oils is reviewed from time to time.

Wheat import

†641. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of wheat imported by Government during the year 2005-06 and 2006-07;

(b) the names of Government agencies which imported this wheat and the price at which the same was given to different Government and non-Governmental establishments;

(c) if so, whether any irregularity was found in this transaction; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) There was no import of wheat on Government account during the year 2005-06. During the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.